



GENOCIDE INTERVENTION

— NETWORK —

Have a hand in stopping genocide

Advocacy How-to Guide

Elected officials need your encouragement and support in order to make ending genocide a priority.

Your elected officials have the ability to pass legislation and utilize diplomatic pressure to end genocide.

However, the *political will* necessary to require elected officials to take action must be generated by you, the voter.

Your elected officials need to know that you support:

- the promotion of **peace**
- the **protection** of civilians
- **punishment** for the perpetrators of genocide
- **prevention** of future genocides

Take Action: Make Your Voice Heard!

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Communicating with your legislators

Members of the United States Congress (comprised of the House of Representatives and the Senate) have the power to **create and recommend U.S. policy necessary to end genocide**.

Additionally, Congress has control over federal spending and must work to **provide the funding necessary to ensure civilian protection**.

Make the Call

Dial 1-800-GENOCIDE to be connected directly to your legislators

- Simply call the toll-free hotline (1-800-436-6243).
- You will be asked to enter your zip code.
- Choose whether you would like to speak to one of your senators or your representative (select 1 for representative or 2 for senator).
- You will receive updated talking points before being connected directly to the office.

Sample introduction: Hello, my name is _____. I am a constituent calling to urge the representative/senator to...

What to know before calling

- The Darfur Scores grades of your representative and senators available at www.DarfurScores.org.
- Hotline talking points and additional information available at www.1800Genocide.com.

What to expect

- Your call will most likely be answered by an office assistant who will be able to take down your comments. If you would like to have an extended conversation with the office, ask to speak to the legislative assistant who handles international affairs. Ask to leave a message if they are unavailable, and don't be afraid to call back to follow-up.
- Be prepared to give your name and address if asked. This information is used to confirm that you are a constituent.

Write to Your Elected Officials

Use your pen or grab your keyboard

- Get the contact information: find the district address or the electronic comment form for your elected official. Go to www.congress.org.
 - Enter your zip code and then select which official you would like to send a message.
 - The "contact" tab will give you the district address and the ability to send an email through the web form.
- Compose your message.
 - Need help figuring out what to say? Check out the legislation page at www.genocideintervention.net/advocate/legislation/current.
 - Keep your message short, direct and focus on one specific ask.
 - Include information about the Darfur Scores grades of your elected official. Grades are available at www.DarfurScores.org.
 - When writing a letter, handwritten communication is the most effective.
- Send or mail your message.
 - If you are mailing your letter, it is most effective if you send it to the district office.

Face to Face Meeting

An in-person visit with a member of Congress or their staff is the single most effective way you can advocate for an end to genocide.

You can meet your legislator or their staff in Washington, DC, or in their district office near your home.

How to schedule a meeting

- Find the office phone number for the district or Washington, DC office of your elected official. Go to www.congress.org.
 - Enter your zip code and then select which official you would like to send a message.
 - The "contact" tab will give you the phone numbers of both the district and Washington, DC offices.
- Choose which office you would like to call based upon where you will be meeting (if you are meeting in-district call the district office closest to you).
- Call the office and ask to speak to the scheduler.
- Schedule your meeting.
 - Let the scheduler know that you are a concerned constituent interested in meeting with your representative/senator.
 - Be prepared to describe who you are and what you would like to talk to your legislator about.
- If your representative/senator is not available, ask to meet with the legislative assistant who handles international affairs.

What to expect

- It may be difficult to meet with your elected official in person. However, you can always meet with a member of your elected official's staff. Oftentimes meeting with the staff member who handles international affairs is the best person to talk to about your issue.
- Don't go alone. It will be easier to get a meeting and have greater impact if you have a group of people and/or represent a group of people.

What to bring to your meeting

- A printed copy of your legislator's report card from www.DarfurScores.org.
- Basic talking points on the conflict and your specific ask.
 - If advocating for a specific bill, bring the bill's name and number with you.
 - Need help figuring out what to ask? Check out the legislation page at www.genocideintervention.net/advocate/legislation/current
- Other members of your community concerned about the issue.
- Information about your efforts, your organization and any related local news coverage.
- A camera to document your visit. Got pictures? Send them to info@genocideintervention.net.

Communicating with the White House

Make the Call

The president is responsible for implementing and enforcing laws like the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act of 2006. The president needs to do everything in his power to end the genocide in Darfur. When contacting the office of the president, you can demonstrate the concern of the public and encourage the president to take every action possible to end genocide.

Dial 1-800-GENOCIDE to be connected to the White House.

- Simply call the toll-free hotline (1-800-436-6243).
- You will be asked to enter your zip code.
- Choose to speak to the White House (select option 3).
- You will receive updated talking points before being connected directly to the office. Hotline talking points and additional information are also available at www.1800Genocide.com.

Sample introduction: Hello, my name is _____. I am a concerned American calling to urge the president to...

What to expect

- Your call will be answered by an operator who will take down your comments.
- Be prepared to give your name and state of residence.

Additional contact information

Address

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Fax

202-456-2461

Email

comments@whitehouse.gov

Write a Letter to the Editor of Your Local Newspaper

Writing a letter to a local newspaper is a good way to increase dialogue and visibility of the Darfur situation and influence elected officials' decisions on the crisis. Consider writing a letter to the editor, informing readers about the current situation in Darfur, your elected officials' stance on pending legislation, and organizations in the community through which readers can take action.

What to write about

Provide brief background information to let others know why ending the genocide in Darfur is important. Include information about your personal experience or expertise if relevant.

Focus on specific actions that readers and politicians can take to help end the genocide in Darfur. Here are some suggestions:

- Research your elected officials' grade on Darfur at www.DarfurScores.org. Discuss your legislator's grade and encourage others to take notice of your elected official's performance.
- Research pending legislation and/or policy to include in your letter.
 - For information on the latest legislation go to www.genocideintervention.net/advocate/legislation/current.
 - For information on policy go to <http://www.genocideintervention.net/advocate/legislation/policy>.

Hint: Tie your letter to a news story the paper has already run. Editors are more likely to publish letters that respond to specific articles.

Find your local paper

Your local newspaper is more likely to publish your letter to the editor. Writing to your local paper is a good way to get the attention of your elected officials, and help to educate your community on the issue. To look up contact information for your local newspapers go to www.congress.org/congressorg/dbq/media.

5 Tips for Effective Congressional Communication

1. Build a Relationship. All communication with your legislators helps in the fight to end genocide, but communication is most effective if you have an established relationship with your elected official.

In building a relationship, work to support elected officials who have been strong on your issue, and challenge elected officials who have been weak to take action.

If your legislator is new to the issue or has performed poorly on the issue in the past, don't expect them to jump right in and champion the cause. Most often, it takes a series of small successful steps before a legislator will become actively engaged.

2. Prepare. Your conversation will be the most effective if you come prepared to discuss your issue.

Prioritize. Be clear about what action you would like your legislator to take and make it the priority of your conversation. For more information on actions that your elected officials can take today visit: www.genocideintervention.net/advocate/legislation/current

Know a few key facts. Be prepared to give some background information on the conflict and details on what you are asking your elected official to do. How can they and why should they take a specific action?

Make it personal. Be prepared to briefly describe who you are, why you care and how you have been involved.

Don't be afraid to say "I don't know". If a question comes up that you can't answer, be honest about the fact that you don't

know. Find out the answer after your conversation and follow-up promptly.

3. Stick to One Specific Ask.

Demanding too many actions at once can be overwhelming, confusing and counter-productive. Make your message clear.

Choose one ask and be as specific as possible (for example: "vote in favor of bill number 123"). Stay away from general asks like "end the genocide in Darfur".

4. Say "Thank you". Elected officials rarely receive positive feedback from their constituents. In communicating with your legislators be sure to recognize their work on the issue—no matter how small.

If your elected official takes action as a result of your request, don't forget to say thank you. Positive feedback can go along way to encourage continued action and facilitate a productive relationship.

5. Build a Community. There are people in your community who care about your cause. Don't be afraid to reach out to various groups. Legislative offices are moved by informed, coordinated, and diverse groups of constituents. Group action demonstrates that many people care about an issue and therefore the legislator should too.

For more information visit: www.genocideintervention.net/advocate/action/toolkit

Advocacy Action Chart

Action		Time Investment	How effective is the action?	When is it best to use this action?	What can help to increase effectiveness?	
Legislators	Hand-written letter	Moderate	Significantly	When you have a few extra minutes and when there is no immediately pressing action	Handwrite your letter, make it legible and include a return address	
					Encourage others to take action with you	
					Speak on behalf of a group (no matter how small)	
					Mail letters to the district office	
	Electronic communication (email or online comment form)	Moderate	Moderately	When you have a few extra minutes and when there is no immediately pressing action	When you have a few extra minutes and when there is no immediately pressing action	Follow-up
						Encourage others to take action with you
						Speak on behalf of a group (no matter how small)
						Include a return address to show that you are part of the district; offices often keep logs of addresses and names of those who have contacted them about specific issues
	Call	Minimal	Moderately (except when urgent action is needed and then calling is significantly effective)	When quick action is needed (e.g.: an upcoming vote)	When quick action is needed (e.g.: an upcoming vote)	Follow-up
						Encourage others to take action with you
						Speak on behalf of a group (no matter how small)
						Leave your message with the legislative assistant for international affairs
Meet	Substantial	Extremely	To build a permanent relationship with the office of your legislator	To build a permanent relationship with the office of your legislator	Demonstrate the community's interest in the cause and bring any related local news coverage	
					Don't go alone: encourage others to come with you	
					Speak on behalf of a group (no matter how small)	
					Follow-up	
White House	Write	Moderate	Moderately	In instances when only the President has the ability to take action	Encourage others to take action with you	
	Call	Minimal	Moderately			
Letter to the Editor		Moderate	Significantly	To raise awareness in your community and to draw attention to your legislators' records to end genocide	Discuss your legislators' Darfur Scores grades	
					If your letter to the editor is printed, send a copy to the offices of your elected officials	
					Recommend an action	
					Tie your letter to a previously published article on the subject	